

VZCZCXR05177
OO RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM RUEHNH
DE RUEHGO #1461/01 2750941
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 020941Z OCT 06
FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5217
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1143
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 9910
RUEHK/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 4341
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1804
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 3537
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0511
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 7009
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 4628
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA 0914
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU 0918
RUDKIA/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI 0642
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 2867
RHEHN/NSC WASHDC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0519
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 RANGOON 001461

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/MLS; PACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/01/2016

TAGS: PGOV PHUM PREL BM

SUBJECT: (C) REGIME DETAINS TWO MORE PRO-DEMOCRACY LEADERS;
88 GENERATION STUDENT LEADERS REQUEST MEETING WITH GAMBARI

REF: A. RANGOON 1432

1B. RANGOON 1436

RANGOON 00001461 001.4 OF 002

Classified By: P/E Chief Leslie Hayden for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (U) SUMMARY: On September 30 the GOB detained two more leaders of the 88 Generation Students pro-democracy group. In a meeting with emboffs shortly before his arrest, 88 Generation leader Pyone Cho said their organization is preparing for the potential long-term detention or arrest of several of its members. The group is organizing a signature campaign they plan to publicize through the international and exile media. NLD labor activist Su Su Nwe is also organizing a protest to show support for the Students. The 88 Generation Student leaders asked us to convey the facts of their leaders' detention to U/SYG Gambari and to relay their request for a meeting with Gambari during his next visit to Burma. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) On Saturday, September 30, the regime detained two additional leaders of the 88 Generation Students, Min Zeya and Pyone Cho. Min Zeya was taken from his house by Police Special Branch at 10:00 a.m. and has not been heard from since. Shortly after meeting with Emboffs at his request, Pyone Cho was also detained. Mya Aye, a close associate of Min Ko Naing from Mandalay, was also present at the Saturday meeting with Emboffs and was questioned by Special Branch but not detained.

13. (C) During the September 30 meeting, Pyone Cho and Mya Aye said they were preparing their organization for the potential long-term detention or arrest of several of their group's leaders and members. The 88 Generation Students held a series of meetings on September 27-29 and designated three

tiers of interim leadership for their organization. If the top layer is detained and arrested, the next layer will take over, choose another layer of leadership, and communicate clear instructions to continue the organization's pro-democracy work. Pyone Cho and Mya Aye said that they had been consulting closely with the NLD and that high-level NLD members are offering their understanding and full support. The students' organization is committed to solving Burma's problems peacefully and through open dialogue with the regime and the ethnic groups. The 88 Generation Student leaders asked us to convey the facts of their leaders' detention to U/SYG Gambari and to relay their request for a meeting with Gambari during his next visit to Burma.

¶4. (C) Five days after their leaders' detention, the 88 Generation Students now consider them arrested and have started a petition campaign requesting the release of their leaders and the initiation of a regime dialogue with Aung San Suu Kyi, and the major ethnic groups. The students are distributing signature forms to the NLD and pro-democracy organizations for wide-spread public dissemination. The students also intend to highlight their campaign through exile and international media to draw further international support to the cause. Pyone Cho and Mya Aye told us they are very worried that the younger members of their group are growing restless and are anxious to demonstrate. The signature campaign is designed to keep them busy and focused on the organizations' long-term goals as well. We have also heard that former political prisoner and NLD labor activist Su Su Nwe is organizing a march with other women to protest the detention of the 88 Generation leaders.

¶5. (C) COMMENT: In light of these ongoing detentions, Post was surprised to see media reports that U/S Gambari told the UN Security Council during his September 29 briefing that the regime was making progress in several areas, including the

RANGOON 00001461 002.4 OF 002

release of political prisoners. The only significant prisoner releases of the past four months have been Su Su Nwe and one other labor activist, both freed only after intensive ILO pressure and international publicity about their cases. We were also concerned to see that no UN representatives attended the NLD's September 27 anniversary celebrations. UN officials are usually present at all major NLD events. The regime's detention of several of the country's most prominent pro-democracy activists on the eve of the UNSC briefing is a clear sign the regime has little interest in a meaningful dialogue with the opposition. The international community must push Gambari to use his second visit to insist on concrete actions that show the regime has the will to move Burma toward democracy. A statement from the SYG or Gambari now, calling for the immediate and unconditional release of the 88 Generation Student leaders, would send a strong message to the regime that the international community expects to see steps forward, not backward. The EU, Canada and Australia are preparing to speak out about these detentions. We should urge Gambari to do likewise. End comment.

STOLTZ